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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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6 August 1966

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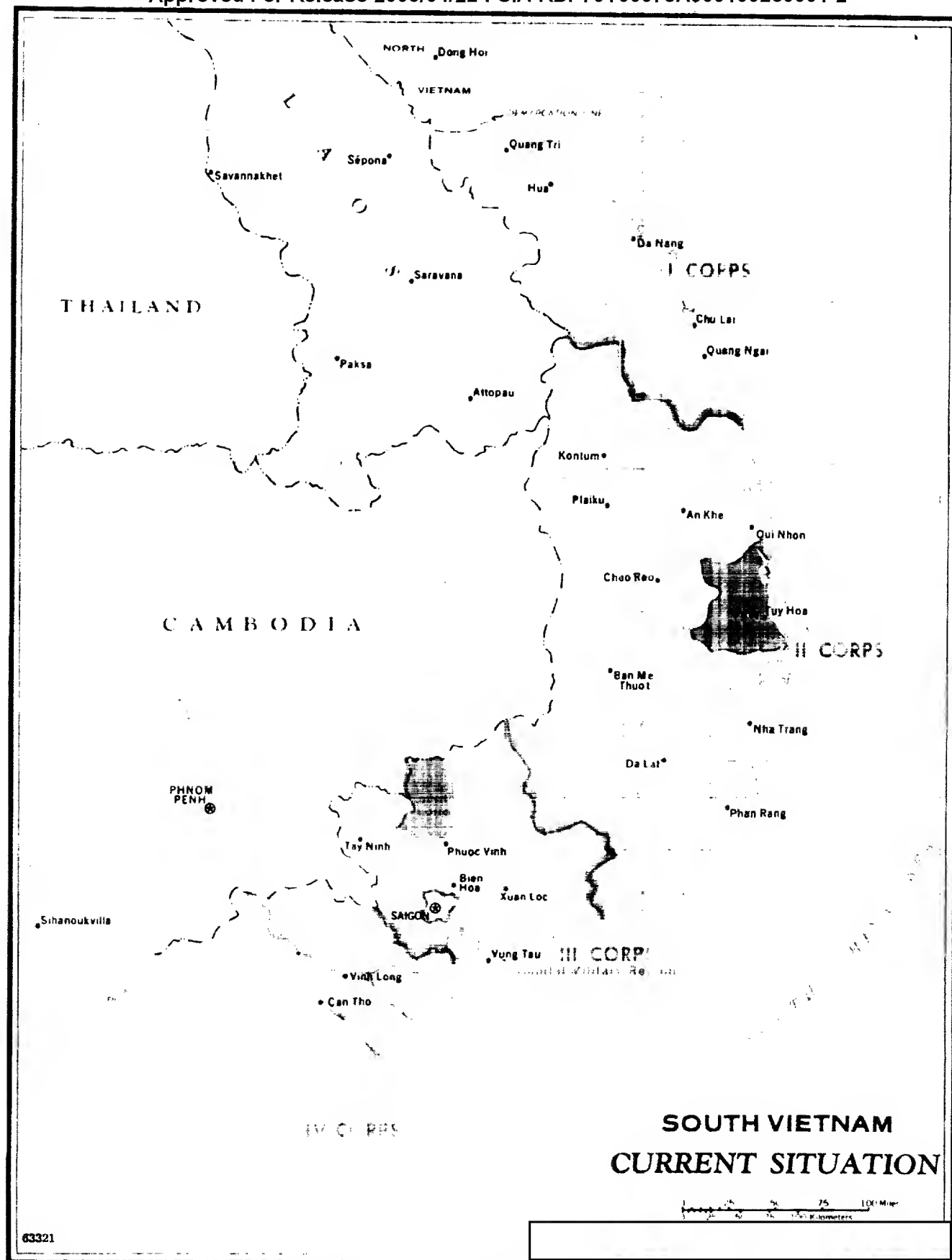
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: No significant contact has been reported during the past 24 hours by any of the 19 allied operations of battalion strength or greater currently in progress.

Delayed information indicates that on 4 August a South Vietnamese company operating in Binh Long Province, about 70 miles north of Saigon, established contact with an estimated Viet Cong battalion with no known losses on either side. Also on 4 August, another government company suffered casualties--two wounded and two missing--in a clash some 35 miles southwest of Saigon with a Viet Cong platoon which lost 20 killed. The same day, a South Korean company encountered a Communist force in sampans along the coast of Phu Yen Province, and killed 17 of the enemy with no losses to itself. (See Map)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: There is considerable speculation in Saigon that Buddhist extremist Tri Quang may shortly end his hunger strike and make a visit to Japan.

Recent articles in the local press have raised the possibility that a visiting Japanese delegation may issue a formal invitation to Tri Quang. One Buddhist priest in the delegation has queried the US Embassy for its views on such a proposal. Although the attitude of Quang, still under intensive guard in a Saigon clinic, is unknown, one Saigon paper has quoted a Buddhist Institute spokesman as stating that any formal invitation would be taken under Institute consideration.

(continued)

The Japanese ambassador to Saigon has also told the US Embassy that he has discussed the matter with South Vietnam's foreign minister and with an aide to Premier Ky. Both officials reportedly indicated that the Saigon government would pose no obstacles to Quang's departure, although it would hope to avoid any suggestion of having connived in the proposed trip.

Vietnamese officials, meanwhile, appear increasingly preoccupied with preparations for the September constituent assembly elections. The appeals of some 23 initially disqualified candidates are still to be resolved by the Central Election Committee before final posting late next week. Almost half of the cases still pending involve candidates with relatives among the Viet Cong, the Liberation Front leadership, or the Hanoi government.

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[redacted]
[redacted] the basic popular attitude toward the elections in the Mekong delta provinces is one of apathy and cynicism, including the belief that the government will control the outcome. Certain politicians in Saigon have also alleged apathy among middle-class voters there, although voter interest is expected to rise when the campaign opens officially in late August.] [redacted]

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West Germany - France: French-German talks on 3 August on the future status of French forces in Germany made no progress.

Bonn's firm position indicates that the Foreign Ministry is in no hurry to reach an agreement on this issue despite the understanding reached by Erhard and De Gaulle on the desirability that French troops remain.

Foreign Minister Schroeder is apparently trying to keep these bilateral talks from moving faster than the talks between France and its 14 NATO allies on the future mission of French forces. This would deny the French the leverage in talks with the Fourteen that they would likely get from a prior firm agreement between Bonn and Paris on the forces' legal status.

Schroeder, however, may be charged by segments of the German press and by pro-French politicians with "sabotaging" the understanding reached by Erhard and De Gaulle. Of importance will be the support he gets from Erhard, whose willingness and ability to withstand the pressures for compromise are uncertain.

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Guatemala: [The Communist action group, FAR, is preparing to resume terrorism this month.]

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[Following Turcios' outright rejection last week of the government's amnesty offer and his pledge to continue the FAR's "revolution," government security forces have been bracing for renewed insurgency. However, through its amnesty gesture the Guatemalan Government has probably gained some measure of public support for actions it will find necessary in operations against the insurgents. It has requested US equipment and aid.]

[FAR capabilities for large-scale violence are probably limited at this time. Since President Mendez took office on 1 July, there has been only one FAR action--the assassination of a civilian agent of the military in late July. For the immediate future, FAR is expected to concentrate on further selective retaliatory assassinations or kidnappings.]

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NOTES

Libya: The uncertain health of Prime Minister Maaziq may lead to political instability in Libya. Maaziq recently underwent spinal surgery, and reports suggest that he may resign in the near future. If Maaziq resigns, King Idris will be hard pressed to find another man who can successfully balance Libya's contending political forces.

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